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New York

President:	Miss Durrant	(Jamaica)
Members:	Bangladesh	Mr. Rahman
	China	Mr. Tang Jiaxuan
	Colombia	Mr. Fernández de Soto
	France	Mr. Védrine
	Ireland	Mr. Cowen
	Mali	Mr. Sidibe
	Mauritius	Mr. Gayan
	Norway	Mr. Petersen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Jayakumar
	Tunisia	Mr. Mejdoub
	Ukraine	Mr. Zlenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Straw
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

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The meeting was resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have just received a letter from the representative of Turkey, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Cem (Turkey) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Mr. Louis Michel. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Michel (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey — align themselves with this statement.

Allow me, first of all, to extend my thanks to the members of the Security Council and more particularly to its presidency, for having organized this open discussion at a time when significant developments are taking place in Afghanistan. The Northern Alliance has entered Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul. At a time when the Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, is preparing his recommendations for the Security Council and the Security Council is preparing to adopt a resolution that will support the efforts of the United Nations and Mr. Brahimi in Afghanistan, this meeting provides the international community as a whole with the opportunity to make its voice heard.

At the outset, I wish to restate the European Union's support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative. The Union will look favourably on any recommendations Mr. Brahimi may prepare, and we salute his efforts to date. I also wish to recall that the European Union as such wishes to participate actively, under the aegis of the United Nations, in the quest for a political solution and in the subsequent reconstruction of Afghanistan.

All of us here agree that terrorism is a real challenge for the whole world. On several occasions the European Union has expressed its total solidarity with the American people and Government. It has also made it a priority objective to combat the scourge of terrorism. We are convinced that this fight requires as broad an international coalition as possible, under the aegis of the United Nations. This Organization remains the most appropriate forum for reinvigorating and reinforcing the efforts aimed at eliminating international terrorism. By holding yesterday's ministerial discussion and adopting a resolution, the Security Council highlighted this fact once again, which I welcome. The threat we face today is global, and so must be the cooperation between all cultures, religions and societies. The fight against terrorism is not directed at the Muslim world. We respect the Islamic traditions and the values it has brought to the world.

The European Union firmly supports the targeted military operations that began on 7 October, which are legitimate and in accordance with the terms of the Charter and Security Council resolution 1368 (2001).

As our heads of State and Government stated on 19 October, the objective is, and will continue to be, to eliminate the Al Qaeda terrorist organization, which was unquestionably behind the terrorist attacks on 11 September. Its leaders have not been handed over by the Taliban regime, which has, on the contrary, continued to harbour them. The target of this military campaign in Afghanistan is clearly not the civilian population. We believe that this civilian population, which is already the victim of a serious humanitarian crisis and which has endured the oppressive Taliban regime for far too long, must as far as possible be spared the consequences of the military operations.

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is quite simply alarming and is continuing to deteriorate. We know that this crisis will worsen with the onset of winter. The evolution of the situation on the ground has to be used to quickly improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance and to come to the aid of the refugees and the displaced persons.

Emergency humanitarian aid remains an absolute priority for the Union, which has undertaken to

mobilize without delay aid amounting to more than 320 million euros. We also wish to stress the importance of releasing the funds promised by the international community.

The European Union supports the efforts of the United Nations specialized agencies, of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of all humanitarian organizations involved in seeking practical and flexible solutions adapted to needs. It also appeals to the countries of the region to facilitate, by all means possible, the humanitarian operations for taking in new flows of Afghan refugees. As I was able to see during my recent trip to the region, the neighbouring countries are also suffering the consequences of the crisis in Afghanistan. The Union therefore calls on the international community to come to the aid of these countries.

At this crucial moment for the future of Afghanistan and regional stability, the European Union would like to reiterate the position it has taken since the beginning. There will never be peace and stability in this country unless a democratic and broad-based Government, including all ethnic groups, is established there. That Government will have to adhere to the commonly accepted principles of respect for human rights and law.

The European Union believes that it is up to the United Nations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to play a central role in helping the Afghans in their difficult task of establishing such a Government. The Union stands ready to support the United Nations' plans wards this end. It strongly insists that the Northern Alliance contribute without any reservations to those efforts, in particular by temporarily holding Kabul in trust, for the benefit of the entire Afghan people. We are convinced that any political settlement in Afghanistan must be based on the will of the Afghans themselves.

We wholeheartedly support the current and future United Nations efforts to achieve this strategic objective. However, no one underestimates the difficulties that remain to be overcome. The uncertainties surrounding the length and consequences of the military campaign mean that the United Nations will have to play it by ear to a certain extent. Any strategic vision must take this into account.

The European Union stresses the importance of incorporating a human rights dimension into any settlement concerning Afghanistan. Under the Taliban regime, serious violations of human rights and of the principles of humanitarian law have been committed. We have in particular condemned the discriminatory and inadmissible treatment of women, whose most basic rights are systematically and methodically flouted.

Post-conflict resolution represents a tremendous challenge. Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. It has been through 20 years of invasion, civil war and natural disaster. For more than four years now it has been beset by drought. Once we have succeeded in establishing a Government that is stable, legitimate and representative of the whole population, the international community will have to embark on a programme to reconstruct the country. That is why the Union considers it so important to initiate a plan for the economic and institutional reconstruction of Afghanistan right away. It is essential for the political process to be backed up by economic aid. The development of agriculture will help to combat the cultivation of opium poppies and drug-trafficking. The implementation of a mine clearance plan will facilitate the aid delivery and the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons.

The challenge before us is vast and multidimensional. Success will depend in large measure on our ability to take account of the regional dimension. It is clear that stability in Afghanistan will increase regional stability. On the other hand, a lasting solution in Afghanistan presupposes that the legitimate interests of neighbouring countries are taken into account. It is therefore vital for those neighbouring countries to be closely involved and to play a constructive part in the United Nations efforts. These efforts would be further facilitated by coordination between the countries of the region themselves. The Union intends to enhance its relations with Afghanistan's neighbours and hopes to contribute through its initiatives to reinforcing the process of regional stabilization to be led by the United Nations.

The aim of our action is to assist the United Nations in its efforts to help the Afghan people help themselves. It is essential for the international community to participate in these efforts. The neighbouring countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference will obviously have an important part to play. As for the European Union, the Council can count on its active support.

The President: The next speaker on my list is, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Jozias J. van Aartsen; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. van Aartsen (Netherlands): The Netherlands fully associates itself with the statement of Belgium, which currently holds the Presidency of the European Union. Therefore, I will limit myself to three specific but interrelated issues — politics, security and reconstruction — to convey a message of urgency.

First, concerning politics, as the military campaign proceeds, the realities on the ground in Afghanistan are changing quickly. This has direct consequences for the political weight that every segment of the Afghan population carries in negotiations on the future Government. It is urgent that Ambassador Brahimi start bringing parties together, as part of the fulfilment of the comprehensive proposals he presented this morning. A new political structure should be founded on Afghan ownership and should not be imposed from outside. A central role for the United Nations, as a catalyst and adviser — not as a governor — is a necessity. The Security Council resolution must, in our view, encourage Ambassador Brahimi to act speedily.

Secondly, as concerns security, the success of the military campaign against terrorism should not result in the predominance of a particular party or faction. More specifically, the possession of towns should not determine exclusively the outcome of the political process. The Security Council resolution must enable swift action to ensure as soon as possible some international, preferably United Nations, presence in the towns that changed hands in recent days. Very soon after that, transitional military arrangements will be essential to create a secure environment. It is therefore important that the Security Council resolution decides on possible and doable options on that.

My third point is on reconstruction. The United Nations should take the lead in coordinating and organizing reconstruction and rehabilitation. Quick-impact projects in areas such as food, housing and water supply should be implemented without delay to support economic recovery.

There is no need to set up new channels or structures for international aid. The Afghanistan Support Group can continue to act as the platform for donor coordination, supporting the United Nations. A humanitarian donor conference must be coordinated by the United Nations. The Security Council resolution must underpin the role of the United Nations and the Afghanistan Support Group.

I fully agree with Ambassador Lavrov's idea that Afghanistan is not the prerogative of the "six plus two". For the United Nations effort to succeed, it is important that not only the wider membership stays involved, but that also those countries providing the bulk of resources, are a participant in the policy-making process. Their level of commitment must be reflected by, for example, setting up a group of friends to support the work of the Secretary-General on Afghanistan.

To conclude, I am grateful for Ambassador Brahimi's briefing this morning; he deserves our full support. The Security Council resolution has to provide him with the right tools to act promptly. These tools are: first, encouragement to bring the parties together speedily; second, some international presence in the cities in the very short term; third, a quick decision on achievable or doable options for security arrangements; and fourth, swift action in the area of early reconstruction and an unequivocal choice in favour of the Afghanistan Support Group.

In this way, the Council will have set up a coherent strategy that will allow the United Nations to move forward.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand. I extend a warm welcome to The Honourable Phil Goff. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Goff (New Zealand): Thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting in an open format. May I begin by expressing my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his opening remarks this morning and to his Special Representative, Mr. Brahimi, for the briefing that he also gave us this morning. He has a tremendous responsibility placed on his shoulders and deserves all the support that the Council can give him.

The withdrawal of the Taliban forces from Kabul in the last 24 hours has greatly increased the urgency of the international effort to assist the Afghan people to install a fully representative, accountable government

which will respect human rights. Mr. Brahimi has given us a clear framework leading towards a new constitution and government for Afghanistan. The key challenge before this Council is how the security needs within Afghanistan can be met while steps are taken to establish a new Government. We must, of course, do everything possible to bring to an end the absence of legitimate government and law and order in Afghanistan in which terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking have thrived. We also have a responsibility to help end the cycle of violence and retribution, which has now plagued Afghanistan for over two decades. We see again the graphic and tragic images of that retribution that has occurred in the last 24 hours.

The United Nations has a leading role to play in addressing the political future of Afghanistan. To succeed in its efforts, it must have the firm support of Afghanistan's neighbours. We were therefore greatly encouraged to receive yesterday the declaration made by the Foreign Ministers and other senior representatives of the "six plus two" group. Their endorsement of the United Nations central role and the work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative are critically important.

Well before the events of the eleventh of September, this body had determined that the situation in Afghanistan constituted a threat to international peace and security. That included the Taliban's failure to meet the Council's demands from as far back as December 1998 to stop providing sanctuary and training for international terrorists and their organizations. When those resolutions over three years were ignored, and the attack of 11 September heightened the threat that the terrorists posed to the world, new measures were clearly needed. An international coalition, to which New Zealand is a contributor, is out of necessity engaged in a campaign to suppress the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization and their Taliban protectors. The Taliban withdrawal from Kabul signals important progress, but there is still a long way to go.

Our fight is not against the civilian population. The coalition must exercise the utmost care to avoid civilian casualties. There has already been too much loss of civilian life. The cumulative effects of long-term conflict, the drought and the repressive policies of the Taliban have created an appalling humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. As winter approaches, we must deliver assistance to the millions at risk of starvation and illness. Without that help and a determined effort by this body, the humanitarian disasters of recent years, when hundreds of thousands have died from famine, preventable disease and the cold, will be repeated. The political and humanitarian dimensions of the crisis are intrinsically linked and must be addressed in a coordinated way if we are to find a sustainable, long-term solution in Afghanistan.

This week I have had the privilege of meeting with the Special Representative and with Under-Secretary-General Oshima. New Zealand has contributed to the United Nations consolidated appeal and has offered further assistance, including through the provision of air transport to deliver humanitarian supplies during the coming winter in Afghanistan.

Resolving the crisis in Afghanistan is, I believe, the most important challenge before this body today. The campaign against terrorism, and also against drug trafficking, depends heavily on the restoration of a legitimate government in Afghanistan that observes the norms of international behaviour. Restoring law and order and a government capable of meeting the social and economic needs of its people will contribute enormously to resolving the refugee crisis affecting millions of people living a marginal existence in the refugee camps. Restoring human rights under a fully representative, accountable government will end the repression under which the Afghans have suffered for far too long.

New Zealand urges the Security Council to act decisively so that these outcomes can be achieved, and New Zealand offers whatever support it can to the Council's endeavours.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Abdul Sattar; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sattar (Pakistan): I am grateful to you, Madam President, and to the other members of the Security Council for this opportunity to make a statement on the situation in Afghanistan.

This morning we listened with attention and respect to the statement of the Secretary-General envisioning a hopeful evolution in Afghanistan. The process proposed by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi

testifies to Mr. Brahimi's insight into the problem of Afghanistan.

At yesterday's meeting of the "six plus two" group, Pakistan joined in pledging full support for the sovereignty and independence of Afghanistan and for its unity and territorial integrity. An interim administration of Afghans for their country needs to be urgently facilitated in view of the news that we have been watching since this morning. We greatly appreciate the fact that Security Council members are intensely engaged in efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan. Those efforts have assumed greater urgency because the situation in Afghanistan is evolving faster than was ever expected.

Afghanistan and its people deserve an end to their travail. For more than two decades, they have suffered at the hands of both man and nature. They have been victims of foreign intervention and internecine war, the ambitions of warlords and the irrational obsessions of Osama bin Laden, who has abused the Afghan tradition of hospitality to spread terror across the globe. Over the decades, more than a million Afghans have perished. The economic infrastructure of their country has been devastated.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September, which killed thousands of innocent people in New York and in Washington, D.C., provoked righteous condemnation by the United Nations. Pakistan joined the rest of the world community in expressing grief and condolences. We also followed words with action, and joined the coalition for the war against international terrorism in order to bring perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the outrage to justice.

The military action has inflicted unintended suffering on innocent people in Afghanistan. We grieve for them too. We believe that the military action will be as short as possible, and that the achievement of its objectives will pave the way for bringing an end to the suffering of the Afghan people.

In a speech to the General Assembly on 10 November, President Pervez Musharraf called for military strategy to be combined with political and humanitarian strategies in order to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan and relief and reconstruction to its people. The United Nations has long endorsed the principle that the Government in Afghanistan should be broad-based, representative and multi-ethnic. Pakistan has emphasized that, for stability, the post-Taliban Government should be representative of the demography of Afghanistan. The political strategy should ensure the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, and the process of the formation of a post-Taliban Government should be home-grown as far as possible, with the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference providing needed facilitation.

But another important principle to be kept in view is that the new Government should commit itself to the implementation of Security Council resolutions on Afghanistan and the principles of the United Nations Charter. In the interest of peace and stability in the region, it should maintain friendly relations with all the neighbours of Afghanistan. We are happy to see that those ideas are fully shared by the "six plus two" group and by the Security Council.

Over the past month, Afghan groups have become more active. The Northern Alliance entered into an agreement with King Zahir Shah for the formation of an interim Government. Also, on 24 and 25 October, the Assembly for Peace and Unity of Afghanistan held a large conference of more than 1,500 Afghan notables, including mujahedin leaders and commanders, influential maliks of powerful tribes and dignitaries from various ethnic communities. The conference, which was held in Peshawar, adopted a resolution in favour of the traditional Afghan process of a Loya Jirgah, or grand assembly, for the formation of a Government of peace and national unity. It envisaged an important role for King Zahir Shah in efforts to end the crisis. The King expressed appreciation for the conference as a beneficial opportunity for an intra-Afghan dialogue aimed at forging national unity.

The military situation in Afghanistan is changing at an accelerating pace. Northern Alliance forces have claimed control of large areas of territory and are reported to be pressing on Kabul.

It is particularly important at such a moment to keep the political objectives in focus. The hope of forming a broad-based, multi-ethnic Government is at stake. We must therefore urge acceleration of political action as well: to convene a meeting of eminent and influential Afghans as soon as possible for the formation of a broad-based, multi-ethnic interim arrangement. In that regard, we endorse the four-step approach proposed by Ambassador Brahimi. However, speed is of the essence. Withdrawal of the Taliban from

Kabul has created a dangerous political vacuum. Unless the United Nations is able to put together a political dispensation which is representative of all segments of the Afghan population, conflict and turmoil will continue to afflict that unfortunate country.

For such an interim political administration to play the expected role for peace, stability and unity, it will be vital for it to move to Kabul, the capital and the symbol of unity of the State. The peace and security of Kabul will have to be secured. A multinational force should be created with the coalition providing back-up support. Fears have been expressed of reprisals and even of ethnic cleansing in parts of Afghanistan. Such a disaster needs to be prevented. Otherwise, hopes of preserving the unity of Afghanistan could suffer a mortal blow.

Pakistan hopes that peace in Afghanistan will be followed by international efforts for rehabilitation and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Only thus can we in Pakistan hope for the refugees to return to their country.

The need for a humanitarian strategy in addition to the military and political strategies is urgent. This requires urgent concerted and coordinated efforts, supported with generous funding, to address the needs of the Afghans, not only in refugee camps but also inside Afghanistan. That will involve the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in their home localities. It will also involve the setting up of camps inside Afghanistan to provide emergency support and assistance for internally displaced persons.

Except for Afghanistan itself, no country has suffered more than Pakistan as a result of the turmoil in Afghanistan over the last two decades. We have provided asylum to over three million refugees. The economic and social burden on Pakistan was aggravated after 1989, as world assistance for their maintenance dried to a trickle. The refugees entered the labour force, displacing Pakistanis and increasing unemployment in our country. We are not in a position to open our borders to all those who may want to enter Pakistan in search of food and relief. Unfortunately, despite restrictions, over 80,000 new Afghan refugees have crossed into Pakistan in the past two months. Opening the borders will bring a massive influx of refugees into Pakistan — creating a situation that we cannot afford. There are more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons in Afghanistan and around 5 to 7 million vulnerable people. It is therefore essential to provide assistance to the needy Afghans inside their own country. However, we do not have hearts of stone, and Pakistan will continue to allow the vulnerable Afghans and injured civilians, women and children, to be housed in refugee camps close to the border in Pakistan on a temporary basis. Pakistan, for its part, will continue to do whatever it can to alleviate the hardship of the Afghan people.

Once peace returns to Afghanistan, humanitarian relief has to be sustained. No peace process can work without the commensurate support to rebuild and rehabilitate this war-ravaged nation. It is therefore extremely important to evolve concurrently a comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation plan, which will be put in place as soon as peace returns to Afghanistan. It is imperative for the international community to begin work immediately on this plan and to arrange the necessary finances to support and sustain it. Any reconstruction effort in Afghanistan must, at the minimum, entail the restoration of water management systems, the revival of agriculture, the reconstruction of infrastructure, the rebuilding of institutions and continued humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. To this end, the President of Pakistan proposed the establishment of an "Afghan Trust Fund" under the auspices of the United Nations to assist in humanitarian relief, as well as in national reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in Afghanistan.

This time, the international community must not walk away from Afghanistan. It must demonstrate the political will and the determination to engage and help the Afghan people in rebuilding peace and the economy of their country. The world community disappointed the Afghans in the past. The negative consequences of that neglect are clear for everyone to see. We must not repeat that mistake.

Before concluding, I wish to reiterate Pakistan's commitment to full cooperation with the United Nations and Mr. Brahimi's efforts to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy. I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Renato Ruggiero; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ruggiero (Italy): This meeting of the Security Council is both timely and crucial, a few hours after the fall of Kabul. I listened with great interest to the presentation of Mr. Brahimi following his recent mission to the region. In taking the floor, I will limit my remarks to three main considerations: first, Italy's commitment to the fight against international terrorism; secondly, the urgency of creating under the aegis of the United Nations and, notably, Mr. Brahimi, a political process aimed at establishing in Afghanistan a broad-based, multi-ethnic and balanced administration; thirdly, but equally urgent and important, the need to develop a strategy for humanitarian assistance to the population both inside and outside Afghanistan.

Italy has pledged to the coalition against international terrorism ground troops, naval units and air forces, and the Government's decision has been supported by an unprecedented display of parliamentary consensus: over 90 per cent of the members of the Parliament. The current military actions — fully legitimate under the United Nations Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions — are targeted at bringing to justice the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks and eradicating the Al Qaeda network and those who provide assistance to the terrorists and harbour them. Italy believes that every effort should be made to reduce further suffering of the Afghan civilian population, the victim for years of a humanitarian crisis aggravated by the policies of an undemocratic and isolationist regime, and to limit to the maximum the loss of innocent lives.

Italy fully subscribes to the principle that the future Government of Afghanistan should be representative and express the broad, multi-ethnic composition of Afghan society. As the European Union's presidency stated earlier, we encourage and support Mr. Brahimi in continuing his efforts with the aim of forming a political alternative to the Taliban regime. The democratic future of Afghanistan should remain in Afghan hands. In the present circumstances, it is critical to assure parallel improvements in the rapidly evolving situation in the region and in the progress of the inter-Afghan dialogue. Italy therefore stresses the need to assist the Afghan people in urgently building a comprehensive political solution involving also personalities from among the diaspora — a solution that gives a voice to every component of Afghan society and contributes to regional peace and stability.

Italy is also assisting the United Nations with its own efforts, as a member of the European Union and as the current presidency of the G-8.

Adequate conditions must be promptly created to prevent a security vacuum, and they should accompany political developments. A proper security framework is an indispensable element for stability and also for the distribution of humanitarian assistance. In fact, we consider that humanitarian efforts should be intensified, particularly for the internally displaced persons. Italy has so far allocated more than $30 million in response to the appeals of various humanitarian organizations. We have also increased our aid to countries that shelter large numbers of refugees.

Together with the United Nations, we are studying how to better assist reconstruction once peace has returned to the region. We intend to consider as a matter of priority projects that can be quickly implemented to benefit the local population, particularly in the agricultural sector, and those projects that promote crop replacement with the aim of eradicating the plague of drugs. The donor community must be mobilized in a clear intervention strategy encompassing the transition from the emergency phase to reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Italy stands ready to consider offering additional resources needed to allow a better future for the people of Afghanistan, who have been crushed by years of civil strife. A coordinated effort is essential, since there can be no lasting peace without creating the conditions for a sustainable and peaceful development.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Kamal Kharrazi; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kharrazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The very name of Afghanistan is reminiscent of vivid images of seemingly endless war, carnage, repression, displacement, destruction, poverty and despair. Afghanistan was long left to itself to struggle with its numerous problems. Time and again, our warnings that the situation in Afghanistan, and in particular the policies of the Taliban, pose serious threats to international peace and security were either taken

lightly or went unnoticed. As a result, the neighbours of Afghanistan had to bear the repercussions of the situation in that country. Among these are unremitting flow of refugees, insecurity, drug trafficking and epidemics, to name but a few.

The horrific terrorist attacks of 11 September have brought Afghanistan to the centre of the international community's attention. The challenge of restoring stability in Afghanistan requires political will and commitment, as well as well-coordinated collective actions. Afghans have been compelled to resort to force to resist the rule of the Taliban, whose ideology has nothing to do with Islam and prescribes terrorism and the gross violation of human and minority rights.

In response to terrorist threats, a military operation has been staged. However, I need to note here that military action is not the solution. The people of that poor nation have suffered enough and do not deserve to suffer from another war. They must be offered other alternatives.

Where do we go from here? How should we respond to the pressing challenge of re-establishing peace, security and normalcy in Afghanistan? How might we help Afghans rid themselves of the Taliban phenomenon? The third ministerial meeting of the "six plus two" group, held yesterday, provided an opportunity to contemplate these questions. I shared some of my views with my colleagues.

It is imperative to pursue a political objective beyond military stand-up and to prepare for a peaceful end to decades of conflict, war and the harbouring of terrorism. The United Nations has a central role in that regard. In this respect, the Islamic Republic of Iran appreciates the continued commitment and support of the Secretary-General. In the same vein, we welcome the timely re-appointment by the Secretary-General of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, a seasoned diplomat who is also very familiar with the situation in the country. I would like to take this opportunity to reassure him of the commitment of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to extend to him its fullest support and cooperation in the discharge of his mandate.

In the light of the developments of the last several days — the liberation of Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, Taloqan, Herat and other provinces in northern and southern Afghanistan — the time has come to advance with much vigour and expedition the process of forming a broad-based Government in Afghanistan so as to avoid the recurrence of past situations.

The idea of a broad-based Government is not a new one. Over years of negotiations and deliberations on this subject matter at various forums, there has emerged a set of principles by which a national unity Government in Afghanistan should abide. These include, as far as internal processes are concerned, democracy, the rule of law, accountability and respect for human rights and the rights of minorities. As regards foreign relations, the post-Taliban Government is expected to be committed to international law; to peaceful and friendly relations with its neighbours; to preventing the use of its soil for subversive, destabilizing and terrorist activities; and to banning the production of, trade in and trafficking of narcotic drugs.

As an essential step, the Security Council should move to adopt a resolution enumerating the principles of the post-Taliban Government, defining the presence and the monitoring role of the United Nations during the transitional period and seeking the mobilization of financial and other resources for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of the country, the repatriation of refugees and the eradication of narcotics cultivation and smuggling.

There is also an urgent need to piece together a time-bound transitional arrangement to move from post-conflict to normalcy. This urgency has been further augmented by recent military developments. The liberation of Kabul should be viewed as a military necessity that should be followed immediately by urgent action by the United Nations to establish, in consultation with Afghan groups, an interim administration. That authority, which should work under a United Nations umbrella, should reflect the ethnic composition of Afghanistan and be of an administrative rather than of a political character.

We call on the United Front, as well as other legitimate groups inside and outside Afghanistan, to cooperate actively with Mr. Brahimi in order to establish such a multi-ethnic interim administration, which would bring about national unity and pave the way for a broad-based and multi-ethnic Government in the country.

A political and monitoring presence of the United Nations is one of the prerequisites for such a successful transition. It would provide guarantees for adherence to

the principles of a proper transition of power in accordance with an agreed timetable and, more importantly, confidence-building among various Afghan groups, as well as institution-building. At the same time, a military presence of the United Nations is needed to ensure peace, order and security until such time as the national army and police are in place. This will not necessarily require a large-scale international military deployment.

Apart from issuing resolutions, the Security Council is required to supervise the situation. It should constantly review and monitor the situation and ascertain whether the parties are adhering to their commitments. However, we should be careful to confine our exercise to delineating the general principles and framework and not decide on who should rule the country. Such a decision is totally for the Afghan nation to make. All the Afghans within and without the country should be given a chance to take part in the process of State-building and to enjoy the right to run for public office. Moreover, the democratic principle of "one person/one vote" must be upheld.

Furthermore, we have made clear to the United Front the expectation of the international community that it will exercise maximum restraint whenever and wherever it takes over Taliban-controlled territories. Here again, we welcome their issuance of a general amnesty and call on them to ensure respect for human rights and international humanitarian law with regard to all Afghans and foreigners. This, indeed, would set a yardstick by which the international community would judge and decide.

Poverty certainly renders peace fragile. The international community, in particular international financial institutions, should contribute significantly to the restoration of peace and normalcy to Afghanistan through mobilization of assistance for reconstruction and development. We need to invest in and for the future. This could be pursued through, inter alia, holding a United Nations-sponsored international conference on the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. We sincerely hope and believe that a coalition for the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan would be stronger and much broader than the current campaign against terrorism there.

We are gravely concerned about a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan. Winter is approaching and after three years of drought, Afghans are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. It is estimated that some 6 million people face starvation. Conditions for vulnerable groups, such as women and children, are even worse. We must not let them starve to death. To avert the existing as well as the impending humanitarian crisis, the provision of assistance to Afghanistan, especially the north of the country, has to proceed at a much more energetic pace.

In conclusion, the time has come to give Afghanistan back to its people and enable them to exercise their right to self-determination. We have to seize the opportunity, for the costs of failure are immense. We must trust the wisdom and aspirations of the Afghan nation. They deserve a better, saner, more prosperous and more hopeful life.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamilov (Uzbekistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to thank you, Madam President, for giving me this opportunity to speak here today. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and Ambassador Brahimi for detailed briefings on the situation in Afghanistan. I also thank them for their prodigious efforts with respect to the whole matter of Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan is a close neighbour of Afghanistan and naturally a stable and enduring peace in that country is in the vital interest of our country. We want to develop very friendly relations with our neighbour Afghanistan. In a short statement, I would like to comment on just a few aspects of the situation.

First, there is humanitarian assistance. Uzbekistan, together with the United Nations, has already delivered humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, making available our infrastructure in a city near our common border. We are deeply convinced that it is extremely important to think not just about humanitarian aid; today we also must consider the economic reconstruction of the country, about which much has already been said here. We believe that the Afghan people's aspirations are fully justified. During the Afghan conflict, a whole generation has grown up knowing nothing in life but war. Humanitarian assistance is necessary, but we also must think about

education, about the minds and spirits of the people of Afghanistan.

Naturally, we support the broad programme for the restoration of peace in Afghanistan as proposed by Ambassador Brahimi. We also support one of the most important principles in this whole process, a central unifying role for the United Nations.

In our view, the events now occurring in Afghanistan bear witness to the correctness of the strategy adopted by the international community for the destruction of the terrorist infrastructure in Afghanistan and the establishment of a firm and lasting peace there.

I would like to confirm once again that Uzbekistan has cooperated and will continue to cooperate fully in the "six plus two" group and with the world community. We will continue to do everything we possibly can to ensure that peace returns to Afghanistan, ensuring in turn the integrity and security of the country. Today, we have a unique chance to bring peace and stability to the region. In our view, that is one of the most important factors in the entire system of international security today.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey. I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Ismail Cem; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Cem (Turkey): I wish to thank the Security Council, and more particularly its presidency for having organized this open debate at a time when the situation in Afghanistan is experiencing significant developments.

Today, we all face a common challenge. This challenge is twofold: to combat the terrorist network which, by exploiting the plight of Afghanistan's people, has taken root within its borders; and to support the revival of an Afghan identity and the reconstruction of Afghanistan by ensuring peace, stability and economic development. We believe that concerted international action, with sound principles and effective methods, is of crucial importance, and that we, as Members of the United Nations, should try to elaborate some of the main approaches which might help Afghanistan develop its own future.

First, in our view, it is the Afghan people who will rebuild their identity and their country. Our task will consist mainly of supporting their efforts to do so. We are not here to dictate who will run their country and in what way.

We also believe that certain cultural elements and regional and tribal allegiances should be encouraged to merge into a single Afghan identity and assume a secondary role as subcultures. It will be very difficult for Afghanistan to maintain its old social fabric and social particularities and emerge as an assertive nation.

Secondly, all countries neighbouring Afghanistan or involved in Afghanistan — indeed, all countries Members of the United Nations — should refrain from having particular Afghan groups as primary allies, and from pursuing particular interests through such allies, which we might be tempted to do. Of course, we are all engaged in a fight — a justifiable, correct fight against terrorism. As the fight continues, we should all be especially careful to ensure that innocent civilians are kept out of harm's way. As countries Members of the United Nations, United Nations agencies and other aid organizations, we should continue to provide comprehensive humanitarian support and continue to try to organize and facilitate such support.

It seems to me that we should, within as limited a time-frame as possible, organize ourselves, provide for basic needs and safeguard the lives and goods of the people in the regions and cities of Afghanistan which are being freed from terrorist oppression. It is very important that we show people that they can have a better future through the positive changes that we can bring about.

Again, it is of capital importance that the Afghan people who have been freed from terrorist oppression see that a concrete change has been brought about and that the new environment provides them with opportunities — although such opportunities may not, of course, be enormous — through concrete, speedy assistance which changes their lives and their environment. It is obvious that such cases will provide a very valuable example to other parts of Afghanistan which are not yet free from oppression. Setting a successful precedent in that respect will serve as the best catalyst for change.

Everyone seems to agree that the future administration and Government of Afghanistan should include all ethnic groups. The new Government should also encompass all political trends whose representatives have not resorted to terrorism. In this process, overemphasizing or undermining the role of

any particular group in the country would be counterproductive.

In the reconstruction of Afghanistan we must move quickly. So far, from the cities and regions that are freeing themselves from oppression, we have received encouraging news that the liberators of those cities are behaving well, and that there is no recurrence of the difficulties that were encountered in Afghanistan some 12 years ago during experiences of a similar nature. But if this goes on and we, as the members of the international community acting in solidarity, do not take prompt action, and if we are not present in Afghanistan, it may be that by the end of the week, or after 10 days or two weeks, we will see negative developments that might jeopardize the future of Afghanistan. We have to act promptly. Turkey is ready to play a significant role in the international effort to build a new Afghanistan. As a friend of the people of Afghanistan, we are ready to take part in every group that will work for Afghanistan's reconstruction and rehabilitation.

It is evident that in the process of rebuilding Afghanistan and the Afghan identity the United Nations must play a leading role, and it is the duty of each and every Member of the United Nations to contribute to that gigantic task.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Germany. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): The German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, who had to return to Berlin last night, has asked me to read a statement that he had intended to make.

> "My country fully associates itself with the remarks made by the Belgian Foreign Minister, Mr. Michel, on behalf of the European Union. It is in view of my country's special commitments with regard to Afghanistan — the first being our chairmanship of the Afghanistan Support Group, and the second our traditional sponsorship of the annual draft resolution of the General Assembly on Afghanistan — that we would like to add some thoughts. Our interest in and political commitment to contributing to the multilateral effort aimed at designing a new political framework for the political future of Afghanistan was again highlighted this morning when our Federal President, Mr. Rau, attended the opening of the Security Council meeting.
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> "One thing is certain: a purely repressive response to terrorism will fail. This is a lesson we must not forget with regard to Afghanistan in particular. For more than 20 years, a murderous war, human rights violations and misery inflicted on millions of refugees have provided the nourishing ground for an unprecedented symbiosis between the Al Qaeda terrorist group and the Taliban regime. From there the trail leads directly to the monstrous attacks in the United States.
>
> "As hard as the decision may be, without military means we will not be able to destroy this hotbed of terror. We must not forget that the humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan is first and foremost the work of the Taliban. They bear the main responsibility for the failure of the previous United Nations peace efforts in that country.
>
> "Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, who provided us this morning with a clear and principled blueprint for the next steps ahead, deserves our respect and unanimous support for his most difficult task. He envisaged the steps ahead, which we should not hesitate to take. These steps are the following.
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> "First, a solution must be found by the Afghan population that must reflect the diversity of the Afghan people and must be accepted by Afghans in an act of free self-determination. The first pressing goal should be the convening of a representative body, with a view to forming a transitional government that will agree on a peace plan and on its implementation.
>
> "Secondly, the legitimate interests and concerns of the States neighbouring Afghanistan must be taken into consideration in the efforts to reach a solution. This could help avoid a unilateral instrumentalization of internal Afghan developments and prevent further interaction of a tragic nature with neighbouring States. The neighbouring States bear a large share of the responsibility for the success of the peace efforts. We appeal to them to cast off old modes of thought and to contribute to regional stability by showing a willingness to compromise.

"Thirdly, a political solution must be legitimized and comprehensively backed by the United Nations. The internal Afghan powers must take responsibility for the solution, yet they will still require the assistance of the United Nations and the international community. This is the prerequisite for stabilizing the situation and organizing relief and reconstruction. Clear political, economic and humanitarian objectives must now be defined. The mandate necessary to this end must be provided by a Security Council resolution.

"There are four prime tasks: a major international effort to provide, rapidly and comprehensively, humanitarian aid to the suffering people of Afghanistan; support for the formation of a representative transitional government and the development of local and regional self-administration; the opening of economic and social perspectives by means of a comprehensive reconstruction programme — a kind of Marshall plan for Afghanistan; and the buttressing of the first three tasks by contributing to security and stability. The Northern Alliance also bears responsibility for this.

"We are very concerned about reports of recent atrocities which might jeopardize ongoing efforts for a political solution. A new political order in Afghanistan can claim legitimacy only if it respects universal human rights and international humanitarian law. The new Afghanistan must be created step by step. Wherever the Taliban's grasp on power has been broken, new hope must be raised through concrete humanitarian relief and reconstruction measures. An appeal to demilitarize the capital, Kabul, seems necessary and reasonable.

"The United Nations must be able to count on broad international support in its quest to support the creation of viable political structures. This requires cooperation from those States which are particularly affected or are playing a major role. Germany and the European Union are ready to do their part. We support Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi and his team.

"The first and most urgent task is securing the immediate survival of the people of Afghanistan. In order to combine and increase the humanitarian efforts made by the international community, we have, as Chairman of the Afghanistan Support Group, convened a meeting in Berlin, to take place in early December. If necessary, such a meeting could be organized at an earlier date. This meeting is intended to send a signal of international solidarity with Afghanistan, in response to the appeal of the Secretary-General made this morning.

"We stand ready, together with our European partners, to meet with the G-21 group of friends on Friday to lay the ground for a lasting framework — a signal of hope and of a new beginning."

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Canada. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): With respect to the situation in Afghanistan, the reaction that we have witnessed today during this public debate demonstrates clearly the commitment of the international community to the Afghan people and the need to find a lasting solution to the longstanding crisis in that country.

The people of Canada are deeply concerned by the current situation and by the need to give full protection to Afghan civilians, particularly internally displaced persons and refugees.

(*spoke in English*)

It is difficult to comment sensibly on such a fast-moving situation, and it is for that reason that we particularly commend Special Representative Brahimi for his extensive and incisive report to the Council and for the wise counsel he is giving the international community in this most complex situation.

Like Special Representative Brahimi, we believe our common goal must be to assist Afghans to establish a stable, multi-ethnic, representative and neutral administration in Afghanistan. That administration must be initiated and supported by a broad spectrum of Afghans, with the full support and cooperation of coalition members, bordering States and other regional players. Easy to say, extremely difficult to do.

We must above all not permit a political vacuum to develop as a result of our current military actions. The international community must act promptly. This

will be decisive to the future of Afghanistan. It is also integral to our campaign against terrorism.

We are much encouraged by the apparent collapse of Taliban resistance in the north. There are already, however, very disquieting reports of lawlessness. Reprisals cannot be a basis for building a new society. Action is needed urgently to bring an international presence, including a United Nations presence, to the liberated areas of Afghanistan, and we are encouraged that Mr. Vendrell and other United Nations officials are moving quickly to do so.

At the same time, we must not lose sight for a moment of our objective — that is, to bring Osama bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network to justice. That remains job one.

For the medium and longer term, the challenges facing the people of Afghanistan and the international community in supporting them are daunting: to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate militants; to establish the rule of law; to create accountable institutions, including a police force and a judiciary; to establish broadly representative governance structures; to promote respect for human rights and tolerance, including the rights of women and children; and to develop strategies to address organized crime and the drug trade.

That said, as others have remarked, the international community can only foster — not impose — a lasting, workable solution to this crisis. We agree with Mr. Brahimi and others that the solution for Afghanistan lies with the Afghan people, both in the country and among the extensive diaspora. The only solution that will be sustainable will be an indigenous one that is of the Afghan people and for the Afghan people, but also supported by the international community.

Success will not come without the financial, political and technical support of those in a position to help on peace-building, on humanitarian aid and on reconstruction. Nor can it succeed without satisfying the legitimate security concerns of all Afghans and of Afghanistan's neighbours. Those neighbours bear a particular responsibility to work together to bring about the kind of peace that is in the interests of the Afghans and, ultimately, of each other.

Afghanistan, a much neglected, abused and abandoned country that has been driven into isolation by extremists, could not even be ranked on the last United Nations human development index. We would like to see a strong central role for the United Nations under the Secretary-General's leadership and with the valued input of Special Representative Brahimi. We need the United Nations to develop strategies for the stabilization of Afghanistan, including the development of functioning government structures. We are pleased to see the creation of an integrated mission task force for Afghanistan. We think that is a very good idea. We would like it to operate a bit less opaquely and more transparently so that we can benefit from it as we draw up our own policies.

We have pledged to work with Ambassador Brahimi and other coalition States to support the Afghan people in the enormous task facing them. The importance of broadly engaging Afghan civil society, including women's groups, in the dialogue over Afghanistan's future cannot be overstated. Afghanistan, especially in its current circumstances, simply cannot afford to deprive itself of 50 per cent of its talent.

In addition to broad-based humanitarian assistance and political institution-building, we believe that the establishment of a Eurasian security and cooperation dialogue would fill a void in the region. It could be an important component of a lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Last, but not least, we look to the United Nations to bring together a cooperative management group of those members of the international community capable of helping, as well as those with direct interests. Canada was engaged in providing assistance to Afghanistan throughout the 1990s, and we are actively participating in the assistance efforts now. We have extensive experience in this area and we are ready, willing and able to help.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, our appreciation to you, Madam President, for your leadership in convening this debate. I would also like to express my Government's sincere gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, for their statements this morning. In particular, we appreciate Ambassador Brahimi's briefing for its keen insights

regarding the steps to be taken in addressing the situation in Afghanistan.

It is essential to attain peace in Afghanistan and to help reconstruct and develop the country in order not only to eliminate the hotbed of global terrorism but also to ensure the long-term stability and prosperity of the neighbouring countries and of the region. However, if we look to the past, we can hardly claim that the United Nations and the international community have given sufficient attention to the difficulties confronting Afghanistan. We must therefore renew our efforts now in order to ensure that the people of Afghanistan will be able to live in peace.

The Government of Japan, together with many Member States, strongly condemns the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September and supports actions against terrorism being undertaken by the countries concerned on the basis of Security Council resolutions. Needless to say, our wish is that, as soon as possible, the day will come when the objectives of the ongoing use of force will be achieved so that the international community will be able to engage in reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

As can be seen from what is happening in Kabul today, the military situation in Afghanistan is changing rapidly. However, even at a time when military actions are under way, efforts are needed to ensure the security of non-combat areas and to provide humanitarian assistance. Once the military actions are brought to an end, those efforts must be further strengthened and rehabilitation and administration must be commenced in a seamless manner. Also while military actions are under way, it is necessary to explore ways to attain political stability in the country. Furthermore, it must also be emphasized that it is essential to provide clear prospects for the reconstruction and development that will take place after military actions end in order to promote efforts to seek political stability in Afghanistan.

Needless to say, in pursuing political stability in Afghanistan it is of the utmost importance to respect the will of the Afghan people. However, the realities in Afghanistan are such that it is difficult to ascertain the will of the people. The activities of Secretary-General Annan and Ambassador Brahimi to explore a path towards political stability in Afghanistan are therefore especially important. The Government of Japan intends to provide strong support and cooperation for these activities.

With regard to the future Government of Afghanistan, Japan has been making it clear that such a government must meet the following requirements, which were also underlined in the "six plus two" joint ministerial declaration issued yesterday. The government must represent every ethnic group in Afghanistan and have the broad support of the Afghan people. It must adhere to international law and establish friendly relations with its neighbours. It must not support terrorism and must commit to prohibiting the production of narcotics. Furthermore, the Government of Japan considers that the convening of a *Loya Jirgah* under Zahir Shah, the former king, is one of the options to prepare for an establishment of such a government.

With winter approaching, there is an urgent humanitarian requirement for the international community to deliver food and other vital goods to the people of Afghanistan, and it is important that Member States join together in supporting the humanitarian activities of United Nations organizations. The Government of Japan has already extended emergency economic assistance, including assistance to Afghan refugees, to Pakistan and other neighbouring countries. It has also pledged to provide up to $120 million for the assistance efforts for Afghan refugees and displaced people in Afghanistan to be undertaken by United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations.

The Government of Japan is preparing to play an active role in the efforts both to attain peace in Afghanistan and to help reconstruct the country, and has appointed as the Prime Minister's Special Representative for Afghanistan the former United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, who has long experience in the area of humanitarian assistance.

Since 1996 my Government has been calling for the holding of a conference for peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan, and I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm the Japanese Government's preparedness to host, at as early a stage as possible, a conference that would contribute to the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan in cooperation with the countries and organizations concerned.

The President: The next speaker on my list is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): We commend your taking the time out during the period of the general debate, Madam President, to preside over this important meeting, which has not come a day too soon. We would also like to express our deep appreciation for your delegation's contribution to the Council's work during the last two years.

Since its birth, the Taliban regime has tortured and tormented Afghanistan. This obscurantist, bigoted, blinkered and sadistic regime, foisted by its foreign sponsor on the Afghan people to subserve its self-serving agenda, has taken Afghanistan to a dark age scarcely to be credited in the world today. The Taliban, shunned by the international community, have destroyed Afghanistan's multi-ethnic culture, tradition of tolerance and historical legacy, uprooting millions of Afghans and driving them from their homes. They spared neither their people nor their priceless cultural heritage. On our collective memory will remain etched forever the picture of a woman being shot dead in a stadium and the blasting of the incomparable Bamiyan Buddhas.

The sinister nature of the Taliban was not unknown to the world, and certainly not to this Council. By its resolution 1267 (1999) of October 1999, it recognized that Taliban-held Afghanistan was an incubator and haven of international terrorism. By resolution 1333 (2000) of December 2000, it recognized the inadequacy of its efforts to reign in this regime's unremitting export of terrorism, imposed some additional sanctions and decided to set up a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance, a clear recognition that the sanctions were being undermined and violated. But until 11 September there was no mechanism in place.

I leave it to this Council's collective conscience to consider whether it responded adequately to the challenge posed to international peace and security by the international terrorism emanating from Taliban-held Afghanistan and those who supported it. The world has paid a heavy price for its failures in Afghanistan, in instalments big and small. This has to come to an end. And for this, as a first step, the Taliban should go, lock, stock and barrel. We should not delude ourselves into believing that there is such a thing as "moderate Taliban": there is not, just as there is no good terrorist. The phrase itself is an oxymoron.

The phenomenon of the Taliban is like cancer. Any good doctor would attest that if you do not extirpate it fully and to the last cell, it comes back, working its malign influence. The unequivocal and clear message that should come from this Council should be that the Taliban have to go, quickly and forever. They have no place in any future dispensation in Afghanistan, in any guise whatsoever. India supports the current campaign to eradicate the terrorist networks in Afghanistan. We hope that it reaches an early and successful conclusion.

After years, there is a window of opportunity to bring peace back to Afghanistan. We should not let this slip out of our hands. The international community should work towards this even while the military campaign continues, so that we avoid a political vacuum at the end of the campaign. In restoring Afghanistan to political health, a new paradigm and idiom is required. No more Great Games, or any games. An Afghanistan at peace with itself is in the best interests of all.

The new Government in Afghanistan should be broad-based and multi-ethnic, with equitable representation of all ethnicities and religious groups, which would reflect the composite mosaic that Afghanistan has historically been. It should reflect the will of the Afghan people and should be the outcome of an intra-Afghan process. If not, it is unlikely to prove acceptable, stable, secure or enduring. It should restore internal peace and harmony and should set the stage for economic and social development, so desperately required in Afghanistan after years of untold devastation.

The constitutional and legal structure that emerges, expressing a balance between the centre and the regions, should fully protect human rights, including the rights of women, children and minorities, reversing the treatment and the discrimination faced by them under the Taliban, healing the grave injustices and wounds inflicted on them and restoring their rightful place in society. Afghanistan's troubled history of internal frictions and struggles of the last few decades, exacerbated by destructive external interference, argues that there may be advantages in establishing a neutral political structure, with

guarantees and protection from outside for its neutrality.

A secure Government capable of protecting its people will require a credible and effective security force. In creating this force, it would be useful to integrate different non-Taliban armed groups into an effective national military and police force. However, neither the new Afghanistan Government nor its nascent security force would be in a position to deal effectively with the thousands of "Arab-Afghans" or other foreign nationals fighting on the side of the Taliban. These rogue elements, fully capable of destabilizing any new Government, cannot be wished away. Many of these are unwanted in their own countries and have no place to go. Many others are in Afghanistan at the encouragement of their authorities, who should be obliged to take them back.

These armed elements and mercenaries would threaten to unravel any new dispensation, a risk which neither the people of Afghanistan nor the international community can afford to run. These elements, therefore, would have to be conclusively and effectively neutralized to enable the intra-Afghan force to discharge its functions of assuring peace and security within the new framework.

In the name of protecting national interests, never spelled out, attempts are being made in some quarters to retain a veto over the architecture of the future Afghan polity. To accept this would be wrong in principle as well as in practice; in principle because it is for a country and its people to determine its own Government, and not outsiders. Would those who would claim a veto over the new Government in Afghanistan give the same right over their own Government to the Afghan people or its Government, if they were to claim this right? In practice, what if there is no agreement on the composition of the new Afghan Government, because of this claimed right of interference? Should there be no Government in Afghanistan? The absurdity of this right to veto is patent. The new Afghan Government should be a Government of the Afghans, by the Afghans and for the Afghans, and should be seen by the Afghans as such. Anything short of this would make it suspect and contrived in the eyes of its own people, undermining its credibility and acceptance.

But countries in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan as well as the international community have legitimate concerns to which the new Afghanistan Government would need to be responsive. Afghanistan can no longer be a nursery and epicentre of international terrorism fuelled by religious extremism. It should purge itself of this menace. It should show resolve to defeat the problem of drug-trafficking. It should not be a centre for destabilizing other Governments. For its part, the new Afghanistan Government should have assurances that there would be no interference in its own internal affairs. This is the key to the future of Afghanistan. Those who harbour the desire to control or dominate Afghanistan should shed it, now and forever, for their own good, for the good of Afghanistan and for the good of the international community.

At this critical juncture, the international community has a crucial role to play in encouraging, supporting and assisting the intra-Afghan process to replace the Taliban with a broad-based Government. We believe that the United Nations should be at the centre of international efforts, and we therefore support the role of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi. We have listened with great interest to the proposals he has made as to the way forward and thank him for his untiring engagement and thoughts. In his difficult and challenging assignment, Ambassador Brahimi would require, and should receive, all assistance from the international community.

To facilitate and channel this assistance, clearly, the "six plus two" group, which has not been effective in the past, cannot be relied upon. This would be a triumph of hope over experience. India would like to add its voice to others from the international community that emphasize the urgency of establishing a new international framework which would include countries that have a legitimate and benign interest in, and influence on, developments in Afghanistan and a willingness to engage constructively and with goodwill in its recovery and rehabilitation. We see no reason why this new framework should not be supported, as those who backed and sustained the Taliban until recently, but now find it expedient to disown it, also affirm that they have changed their spots and subscribe to the need for a broad-based, multi-ethnic and representative Government in Afghanistan. This would be a litmus test of their sincerity.

As a country in Afghanistan's immediate neighbourhood and having an intimate association with

that country reaching back into the mists of history, India has a deep interest in the political, economic, social and cultural welfare and development of Afghanistan. It is willing, and ready, to contribute to the process of bringing lasting peace, stability and development to Afghanistan.

After ensuring peace and security, the first priority in post-conflict Afghanistan would be the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country with massive external assistance. The developmental needs of the Afghan people have to be adequately addressed, and a conducive climate created for the return of the millions of refugees who have recently left the country.

India has already announced economic assistance in the form of medicine, medical services and 1 million tonnes of wheat for the needy in Afghanistan and those displaced from that country. We have also declared our intention of extending a line of credit of $100 million for post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation work. We are prepared to do more.

We do not have the luxury of time. The Council must act with dispatch and purpose, in a transparent manner, to bring peace, political stability, health, truly participatory governance and economic well-being back to Afghanistan. In its endeavours, it can count on our full support and cooperation.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Tajikistan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like at the outset to commend you, Madam, on the excellent way you have presided over the Security Council this month.

We are glad to welcome Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi to this meeting of the Council. We think that the Secretary-General's decision to reappoint him as his Special Representative for Afghanistan is an extremely timely and good one. We fully support his work. We hope that he, together with the Member States and the Security Council, will be able to work effectively on setting the solution to the Afghan problem on a peaceful political course.

Tajikistan is very anxious to see a settlement of the conflict in neighbouring Afghanistan as soon as possible. This would help stabilize further the situation in the country and throughout the region of Central Asia. At the same time, as the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, has emphasized several times, including at United Nations forums, the problem of Afghan does not have only a regional dimension, but a broader, international dimension, too. The tragedy of 11 September highlighted this all too clearly.

Under the present circumstances, it seems to us that we have a unique opportunity to help the Afghan people return to peaceful and stable development, to become a fully fledged member of the world community and to change the image that, unfortunately, has been formed of them in the last few years as accomplices to international terrorism and other criminal, destructive and destabilizing forces.

Afghan society is on the verge of making a fundamental change, and the international community must help it seize this opportunity. Everything must be done to ensure that, in the future, Afghanistan ceases to be a source of threats to the Afghan people themselves, to neighbouring States and to international security overall. Everything must be done to ensure that Afghanistan respects human rights and basic freedoms, and that there is a halt to the shameful discrimination against women and girls. Everything must be done to restore to the Afghan people hope for a future of peace and prosperity.

We consider that deciding the future of Afghanistan is the exclusive prerogative of the Afghan people themselves. The sine qua non for restoring a peaceful life to Afghanistan is bringing an end to foreign interference and uniting the efforts of the world community under the aegis of the United Nations in order to expedite the process of a political settlement of the Afghan problem and reconstruction in the country. It is also necessary to eliminate all hotbeds of terrorism in Afghanistan, elements of organized crime and, as a matter of great importance, the production capacities of the drug mafia.

The territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be ensured. In order to guarantee peace and stability in the country it is necessary to establish an effective government on a broad political and ethnic basis, in accordance with the will and the consent of the Afghan people. The broadest possible Afghan circles, both within and outside of Afghanistan, must all help to build that foundation. Of course, in the future government there can be no place for the Taliban in the political structure, because that would be fraught with

the danger of rebuilding in Afghanistan support bases for terrorism and drug trafficking.

We are deeply disturbed over the difficult humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The Taliban's refusal to implement the demands of the anti-terrorist coalition to extradite the masterminds and organizers of the terrorist attacks against the United States has brought only renewed suffering to the Afghan people and an increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons. With winter coming on, millions of Afghans may die of hunger.

Immediately after the anti-terrorist operation began in Afghanistan, the Government of Tajikistan took a special decision to declare its willingness to make our country's airspace and infrastructure available for the provision of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, who have been suffering for so long under Taliban tyranny. We call on all States and humanitarian organizations to immediately provide the Afghan people with the help they need. The humanitarian disaster threatening Afghanistan must be averted.

As indicated by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, a significant drop in the opium poppy harvest in Afghanistan this year has not led to a corresponding reduction in the amount of heroin smuggled into neighbouring countries and Europe. Huge stockpiles of raw opium were used, and these stockpiles were in Taliban-controlled territory. Neighbouring countries, including Tajikistan, which have been trying to block the distribution of drugs from Afghanistan, have suffered because of this. In Tajikistan alone, three times more heroin was destroyed this year than last, and now the amounts of that deadly product are measured in tons. We attach enormous importance to combating illegal drug trafficking, and we consider depriving international terrorism of one of its main sources of financing as one of our main contributions. We hope that United Nations specialized agencies and donor countries will continue to assist us and our neighbours in this struggle.

It is our hope that this Security Council debate on the Afghan issue will help to strengthen the United Nations central role in coordinating international efforts to find a formula for a political settlement in Afghanistan. My Government will continue to do everything it can to help in solving this matter.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Australia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): Thank you, Madam President, for convening this important and timely meeting on an issue of deep interest to all Member States. Like previous speakers, we thank the Secretary-General for his statement and Ambassador Brahimi for his comprehensive and excellent briefing.

I shall be brief, not least because of the lateness of the hour, but let me make some points very quickly.

The first thing I wish to say, of course, is that there should be no doubt whatsoever that coalition actions against terrorism in Afghanistan are a necessary response to a serious threat to international peace and security. Australia is doing its part to address that threat. We have committed over 1,500 military personnel as well as substantial military assets to assist coalition efforts. Our first objective must be to bring to account the perpetrators of the attacks of 11 September and those who harbour them.

But we must also focus on Afghanistan's own urgent needs and on the international community's obligation to assist that nation overcome its humanitarian crisis and make a sustained recovery. The international community's approach to Afghanistan needs to take account of lessons of the recent past. I want to highlight two of these.

First, countries or regions that drift beyond the reach of international norms and international law become havens for terrorists and international crime. The international community cannot allow this state to persist. Afghanistan needs a government that respects international norms and law. In particular, it needs a government that respects international human rights, including the rights of women — and I am delighted that so many others have referred to that issue in particular — and it needs a government that works to meet its international obligation to combat terrorism and actions that give terrorists support and succour. Such a government will need to be broad-based and representative of all Afghans. Australia strongly supports Ambassador Brahimi's efforts to facilitate the emergence from within of such a government.

The second point I want to make is that disregard for human rights and a hostile relationship with the international community greatly exacerbate

humanitarian crises. The Taliban regime has a very poor record of cooperating with international humanitarian agencies. It has actively hindered humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts. This must end. Afghanistan needs a cooperative relationship with the international community. An Afghan government committed to rebuilding and rehabilitation, to establishing law and order, and to creating conditions that will enable the return of refugees and displaced people should, and will, have the support of the international community. The return from Iran and Pakistan in particular of displaced Afghans should be a first-order priority for Afghanistan, its neighbours and the region more generally.

For its part, Australia has already allocated a total of 23.3 million Australian dollars to assist displaced and vulnerable Afghans in the region.

Afghanistan faces daunting challenges, but these can be overcome. Australia remains fully committed to playing its part in helping Afghanistan put the tragedies of the past behind and to build a more hopeful future.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Mexico. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Madam President, my delegation would like to thank you for having convened this public debate on the situation in Afghanistan. It demonstrates the excellent way in which Jamaica is serving as President of the Security Council for this month.

The situation in Afghanistan is an issue that has held the attention of the Organization, not only in the Council but also in many of its other bodies, over the course of many years. Various factors, such as occupation and foreign interference, drug trafficking, human rights violations and internal conflict have all brought war, instability and a deterioration in living standards to a people that, unfortunately, for more than two decades has known no peace.

With the military action that in recent weeks has been undertaken as a proper response to the abominable events of 11 September, it is time for the United Nations to shoulder more fully its responsibility with respect to rebuilding the country. We agree with the Secretary-General — whom we thank for his introductory statement today — that we must focus our efforts and define international action to promote a climate of stability and comprehensive and lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Tracing the political course that Afghanistan should take is the prerogative of the Afghan people. No entity and no person should try to accommodate their own interests in the process leading to the establishment of the new, inclusive and broad-based Government that will be assembled in the near future. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Afghan people must be unequivocally respected. As Ambassador Brahimi has said, Afghanistan needs help, not interference, from the members of the international community.

The Government of Mexico is convinced that the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, by using their political and moral authority, can take on the mandate to work with all parties in Afghanistan and in the Afghan diaspora to promote, through dialogue and negotiation, understandings and commitments that will lead to the establishment of a representative Government reflecting the interests of all ethnic groups and committed to working for the entire Afghan people.

To my delegation, the road map sketched this morning by the Special Representative in his exceptionally informative briefing seems correct. It is indispensable that, first and foremost, the parties meet to begin a constructive dialogue that will enable them to reconcile their interests and, then, to take concrete action to establish Afghanistan's own political structures that can provide stability for the country.

Rebuilding Afghanistan may be the greatest challenge now before the United Nations. It requires the deployment of all the Organization's political and negotiating capabilities. At the same time, Afghan representatives must begin work on the various elements that go into governance.

All the questions related to the future of Afghanistan are important, as they are part and parcel of the same issue. Yet the Government of Mexico considers that the highest priority must consistently be given to providing for the well-being of the men and women of Afghanistan, who have lived in deplorable conditions and who lack the basic means of subsistence. The Afghan people suffer from poverty, illiteracy, lack of equal opportunity because of gender and the lack of basic services, and all of those

problems must be addressed and overcome through a response to the humanitarian crisis. If any of those negative elements persist, it will have a negative impact on the process of rebuilding the country.

The presence of United Nations humanitarian personnel will help ease the suffering of the Afghan population and will prevent even greater misfortune, especially during the transition period. It is also necessary to address the question of refugees and internally displaced persons, and to work hard to put in place conditions of safety and security that will encourage those groups to return to their places of origin, free from fear and in safe and secure conditions.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): May I begin, Madam, by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. My delegation is convinced that, under your able stewardship, the Council's deliberations will result in a productive outcome.

While Indonesia remains unequivocally committed to working with the international community to eliminate international terrorism, it is mindful that the situation in Afghanistan involves other important aspects, the most urgent being on the humanitarian front. It is in that respect that my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the welcome convening of this open Security Council debate to discuss the situation in Afghanistan, particularly the looming humanitarian crisis of catastrophic proportions that has faced the people of Afghanistan during this conflict. For, even before the events of 11 September, it was already apparent that the Afghan refugee population constituted the world's largest, with an estimated 4 million refugees living in neighbouring countries and more than 1 million displaced persons within Afghanistan's borders. Their situation has, in our view, been further compounded, as was rightly pointed out in the interim report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan:

> "Few people have suffered as the Afghans ... Yet in early 2001, it seemed that they were becoming a forgotten and abandoned people as humanitarian crises in other parts of the world diverted international attention and humanitarian assistance". (*A/56/409/Add.1, para. 4*)

Indonesia shares the deepening concern of the international community over the calamitous humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. It is in that context that the Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia, within their limited means and capabilities, have extended humanitarian assistance amounting to $500,000 to assist the Afghan refugees. It was recently handed over by the Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, who personally travelled to Pakistan to deliver the aid in close coordination with the Pakistani Red Crescent Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The present situation is even more alarming considering that the humanitarian crisis could worsen if security in Afghanistan deteriorates any further. That would impair the efforts of the humanitarian agencies to reach the people most desperately in need of even the basic necessities of life. We therefore urge all concerned parties to exercise self-restraint and to end the climate of strife and violence. It is imperative and urgent at this hour to extend support for the endeavours of the various United Nations agencies to deliver humanitarian aid and other needed supplies to the beleaguered population. At this crucial time, the leaders of the various factions should set aside their differences in the broader interests of their people and should demonstrate political will, sagacity and a genuine desire for peace.

Now more than ever, the United Nations has a pivotal role to play in Afghanistan by promoting the establishment of a broad-based multi-ethnic Government representative of all the Afghan people. In that regard, my delegation extends its full support to the Secretary-General and to his Special Representative on Afghanistan in their endeavours to assist the Afghan people to establish a broad-based Government. The time has also come for the international community to marshal its efforts towards the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Bearing in mind that the economic conditions in the country are inextricably linked to peace and stability, it would require the extensive input and commitment of the global community. Meanwhile, the evolving developments on the ground call for expedited interim arrangements to be put in place, and it is hoped that the United Nations will move to the forefront of these efforts.

Finally, Indonesia hopes that after long years of conflict in Afghanistan, our concerted efforts will contribute in a decisive manner to ensuring a peace which is truly embedded in Afghan soil, as well as in spirit. It should be a peace that fully respects the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and one that only its people can work towards by engaging in constructive dialogue based on compromise and cooperation. For its part, the Security Council should remain seized of the situation in Afghanistan until the untold sufferings of the Afghan people are alleviated and a stable peace is permanently anchored.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council meets today to consider the situation of Afghanistan under particularly sensitive circumstances. That sensitivity derives from the tragic criminal acts committed against the friendly people of the United States of America — acts that led this body to take a firm position, embodied in the Security Council resolution adopted on 12 September that condemns these heinous crimes and reiterates a solid commitment to the United Nations Charter and to "the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence". Subsequently, military operations were pursued in a brotherly Islamic country that has been driven towards a dangerous path by some rogue elements. In this respect, we follow the current military developments on the ground and hope that all parties will adhere to strict rules of self-restraint and that no one will carry out reprisals, collectively or individually.

Egypt understands the motives and justifications that impelled the United Sates of America to resort to military force against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. On the other hand, Egypt has always stressed the importance of a serious and committed effort to avoid any harm to innocent Afghan civilians — a noble people that has been exposed for almost a quarter of a century, by no choice of their own, to suffering and affliction. Their land, regrettably, was subjected to a Great Game between numerous parties. The only result of that game was the loss of life and property. Most regrettably again, some Afghans contributed in the last few years to furthering the suffering of the Afghan population by engaging in a vicious civil war. In their attempt to achieve their narrow and parochial interests and objectives, they only contributed, in the end, to the fall of the country into the hands of a closed and severe regime that knows no mercy towards its people — a regime that opened the territories of Afghanistan for use by outlaw elements who declared war on humanity as a whole.

The people of Afghanistan are currently faced with a human tragedy of huge magnitude that has inflicted extensive damage on their lives. It also threatens their future and their hopes for a stable and peaceful life. There is no doubt about the immediate and urgent need for the international community to stand united in support of the great Afghan people. This requires comprehensive international action to lend a helping and supportive hand and to deliver humanitarian assistance immediately, before the harsh winter season, in order to avoid a major catastrophe.

Talk of the future of Afghanistan requires consideration of the following elements.

First, there is the need to preserve the territorial integrity of Afghanistan, which has to establish good relations with its neighbours, as well as with the international community, on the basis of mutual respect and adherence to international legitimacy.

Secondly, there is the need for all Afghans to engage in the formation of the new Government and in the optimal future administration of their country in a manner that would serve the communal interests of this predominantly Muslim people.

Thirdly, foreign Powers must refrain from any attempt to impose their influence or hegemony.

Fourthly, the international community, in particular the great Powers and those economically capable of doing so, must take serious steps towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan in a manner that would ensure security, stability and peace in this important part of the world. This should lead to the beginning of a new era of stability and development in the history of Afghanistan, as well as the end of suffering there.

Fifthly, the forces of terrorism and darkness must be denied any opportunity to use the territory of Afghanistan for their terrorist acts, which destabilize countries, jeopardize the interests of peoples and burn the bridges of understanding among them.

The United Nations has a vital and important role to play in an Afghan settlement. Such a settlement requires a close examination of what can be done and of the burdens that the United Nations will be able to bear. We must exercise utmost discretion because the responsibility is great. I wish to express Egypt's full support for the efforts of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi in the political field. We hope that these efforts will reach a satisfactory conclusion. We further express our readiness to make any necessary contribution to the restoration of Afghanistan's stability, in order for it to become an effective and positive actor in the international arena.

Egypt was the victim of a vicious terrorist campaign. With the clearly expressed will of the people and through the strict rule of law, Egypt gave a decisive blow to the scourge of terrorism. Egypt fully supports all international measures taken to combat international terrorism for the benefit of all humanity.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Malaysia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): At the outset, Madam, allow me to offer you my sincere congratulations on the assumption of Jamaica to the presidency. Having worked closely with you in the Council before, I am fully confident in your ability and that of your Council team to shoulder the heavy responsibilities that have been entrusted to you during this very challenging month of November. I should also like to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for the outstanding manner in which he guided the work of the Council in the month of October.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to the Council for convening this open meeting to discuss the important situation in Afghanistan at this critical juncture, when the people of Afghanistan are facing, yet again, another sad chapter in the tragic history of their country. Through no fault of theirs, they are now facing the daily bombing of their country in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. They have fled their homes and villages in order to get out of harm's way as the mighty bombs continue to rain down on their land. Over a million of them are now refugees in neighbouring countries. Many more have become internally displaced persons, finding refuge in the inhospitable mountains. They now face the prospect of enduring a long, cold winter, which is fast approaching, uncertain whether they will survive through it all. Once again, the hapless people of Afghanistan will have to endure the bitter fruit of conflict, this time between the Taliban Government that they did not elect and a mighty super-Power, with its overwhelming military might.

Malaysia fully understands the anger of the Government and people of the United States over the horrific terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September. We have strongly condemned these heinous attacks and shared the grief and anguish of the American people over the senseless deaths of thousands of innocent people. We express once again our most profound condolences to the Government and people of the United States and other countries that lost nationals in the attack.

Malaysia, too, lost a number of its own in that tragedy. As an Islamic State, we are very concerned that a group of misguided people who claim to share our religion unleashed these senseless terrorist attacks in the name of our sacred faith. These people cynically distorted the principles of our religion and sought to equate its sacred tenets with their creed of terrorism, exploiting the frustrations of the Muslim community, or ummah, for their own narrow and self-serving purposes.

While we understand the deep anger and natural desire to bring retribution on those responsible, we do not believe that the use of military force is a wise or the best course of action to root out the terrorist menace. Yes, the use of military force is a legitimate course of action as an act of self-defence, but it is not the only course of action, the most effective or politically wise. It is unfortunate that, in the move to punish a group of people who are believed to be behind the terrorist attacks and their protectors, the poor, long-suffering people of Afghanistan have to suffer. They are not the enemies that are being sought out, yet they bear the brunt of the consequences of the military action and are now fighting for survival in the cold winter. While the airdrop of foodstuffs for the refugees and displaced persons is indeed a humane gesture, it is not enough nor will it compensate for the hardships and traumas they have to endure while the bombings continue unabated.

After two decades of civil war, Afghanistan is virtually a failed State. Its ethnic, tribal, linguistic and

ideological divisions are as intense as they are intractable. Internal ethnic conflicts have for years been compounded by external factors that have polarized the fractious Afghan people even further, making reconciliation an even more difficult task.

Avoiding civilian casualties should not only be a matter of tactical concern; it should also be a moral one. As in all such bombings, we are seriously concerned at the so-called collateral damage, in spite of the much-touted precision bombings which are supposed to have taken place. We are concerned at the rather high margin of targeting error in the current military campaign, which has led to the reportedly high death toll among civilians. We therefore appeal for an end to the bombing so as to spare the long-suffering people of Afghanistan further hardship and travail and to allow them to return to their villages and homes for the fast-approaching winter season and Ramadan. Yes, Muslim countries have been known to wage war with one another even during the month of Ramadan, but we should not lose sight of the fact that this war is not between Muslim countries. That perception is important to bear in mind as we, members of the international community, work out a global strategy to fight terrorism. It is important not to lose a war on account of a battle.

That the protracted military engagement in Afghanistan will lead to political and humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan is almost a certainty. The Afghan people cannot endure yet another humanitarian crisis that is likely to result from the attacks. According to concerned humanitarian aid officials and workers, thousands of civilians could starve and impassable roads will compromise the severely constrained relief efforts. Under the best of conditions, the extension of aid under the Taliban has been a monumental challenge. Under the currently more arduous operating environment, it is doubtful that humanitarian supplies can be delivered in the right quantities, to the right locations and at the right time. In the dire situation that the Afghan population is currently experiencing, we insist that the United Nations humanitarian objectives take precedence over the more ambiguous military goals.

The war against the scourge of terrorism is a global one involving all States Members of this Organization. Every Member State, including my own, is prepared and anxious to join in the effort, although not necessarily in the military sphere. It is a multi-pronged effort on many fronts: political/diplomatic, security/intelligence, legal and financial, among others. Combating terrorism requires looking beyond any one terrorist incident and necessitates the consideration of the broader political, social and economic contexts from which terrorism emerges. What is needed is a preventive strategy that would scrutinize its roots. Only a well-formulated strategy, coupled with concerted action, would ensure the destruction of the fertile breeding grounds of international terrorism.

Many United Nations Members, including Malaysia, have called for the convening of an international conference on terrorism, not only to consider the menace in all its aspects, but also to deal with such important issues as definition and practical steps that can be taken to combat this evil. Agreement on a definition is essential in order to ensure the broadest possible support from the international community. The conference will also be able to galvanize international action in support of a comprehensive convention on terrorism that is now being deliberated in the Sixth Committee. Only an international conference at the highest level would be able to find a cure for the disease, rather than merely treating the symptoms, as the current military action will do.

Perhaps the greatest challenge confronting the international community in Afghanistan today is the establishment of a post-Taliban Government in a country wracked by deep inter-ethnic rivalries. Removing the Taliban and replacing it with a new regime might resolve the immediate problem of sanctuary for Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. It may not, however, end the civil war in Afghanistan, the ethnic and religious divisions among the population or the fierce independence of the warlords.

The avowed objective of the political process is to facilitate

> "a negotiated political settlement aimed at the establishment of a broad-based, multi-ethnic and fully representative Government acceptable to all Afghans" (*S/PRST/1999/29*).

Yet, progress towards establishing a multi-ethnic Government that is acceptable to the majority of Afghans and to its neighbours has been almost non-existent. The likely result and danger is the possibility of a power vacuum as the Taliban Government retreats or collapses, with no responsible group ready to fill the

vacuum. In designing a strategy for Afghanistan, it is important to ensure that there be no return to the chaos and lawlessness of the pre-Taliban period.

Since past regional initiatives have failed to secure reconciliation and since no ethnic group holds an overwhelming majority, it is imperative that the United Nations lead efforts to bring about a broad-based multi-ethnic Government. Although previously frustrated by the intransigence of all parties concerned, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, recently re-appointed as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, remains our best hope for a negotiated solution. He should be supported by all Powers keen on realizing a stable Afghanistan, a viable State that can turn into a beacon for regional security and stability. The major powers, including Afghanistan's neighbours, need to come together, under the auspices of the United Nations, to devise a long-term comprehensive plan for the country's political and economic well-being. For once, let the interest of the long-suffering people come first. The worse thing the international community could do, after the conclusion of the military phase, would be once again to abandon the Afghans, leaving them to resolve their political differences. We know where that path has led us.

What is needed is nothing less than a kind of "Marshall Plan" for Afghanistan. However, reconstruction efforts must be initiated early and should be backed by sustained international economic and political support. The stabilization of the country will require some form of peacekeeping presence to prevent the return of internal conflict, as well as the formation of a transitional government that will represent the interests of the various factions.

Stabilizing an impoverished Afghanistan after the Taliban are gone will not be an easy mission, given the internal divisions and the lack of international consensus on the future governance of the country. Nonetheless, the United Nations should stand ready to help establish democratic institutions in the country and prepare its people for future elections with the support of the transitional government.

It is obvious that an inclusive and participatory approach should be pursued in any political reconciliation of the country. The United Nations must not shy away from assuming a leading role, with renewed support from the international community, in striving towards the establishment of a stable and viable Afghan State — not an impossible task, provided the requisite political will exists. For the sake of the Afghans, we must not fail.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of the Republic of Korea; I invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): Madam President, I thank you very much for giving me the floor to speak briefly on this important issue.

My delegation highly appreciates the Security Council's sustained efforts since the 11 September terrorist attacks, as exemplified by its adoption of resolution 1373 (2001) and the continuing work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to deal with an unprecedented threat to international peace and security. It is especially meaningful, in our view, that all Council members expressed in a unified voice their strong resolve to fight against terrorism at the Council's ministerial meeting yesterday. The Republic of Korea will do its part to contribute to the international effort to eradicate terrorism, including the implementation of related resolutions.

The Security Council's efforts in recent years to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan have unfortunately not been productive, despite sanctions targeted against the Taliban. Now the situation in Afghanistan has abruptly changed, presenting new challenges for the United Nations, particularly the Security Council.

We hope that the Afghan people will be able to overcome the suffering caused by years of conflict and harsh rule by the current Taliban regime, and succeed in building a new free and democratic nation on their own. At this juncture, we believe that one of the most critical things for them to do is establish a broad-based, representative political system in which all ethnic and political groups can participate and their diverse interests are well reflected. In this process, they will need the cooperation and support of the international community, particularly neighbouring countries. In this regard, we welcome yesterday's joint declaration by the countries of the "six plus two" group, in which they pledged to make common efforts to support the people of Afghanistan.

My delegation highly appreciates the actions taken by Mr. Brahimi in the past month on the issue of Afghanistan, including consultations on the future of the country, with all domestic and foreign parties

concerned. We are grateful for his comprehensive briefings and fully agree with his recommendations on the provisional government, security forces, humanitarian assistance and national reconstruction, among other things.

We hope that the Security Council will continually address those issues in consultation with other Member States of interest. The Government of the Republic of Korea reiterates that tasks as daunting as the eradication of terrorism and the rebuilding of Afghanistan can succeed only when a broad array of countries pool their wisdom and resources with those of the members of the Security Council.

My delegation shares the great concern of the United Nations over a possible humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan, which could exacerbate the existing problems of millions of refugees. Let me conclude by taking this opportunity to say that the Republic of Korea is extending $12 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Afghan refugees in and around Afghanistan. I assure the Council that we will also do our utmost, together with the international community, to support the reconstruction effort and put in place an effective mechanism for securing peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Kazakhstan. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and also to thank his Special Representative, Mr. Brahimi, for his briefing.

The refusal of the Taliban movement to fulfil the conditions of the anti-terrorist coalition has brought new suffering to the Afghan people. Hundreds of thousands have left their homes and joined the millions who have crossed the borders of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan and are in camps with insufficient shelter and inadequate food. With winter approaching and night-time temperatures below zero, the humanitarian situation is critical, taking into account the recent drought that afflicted Afghanistan.

To manage the current humanitarian crisis, the international community should intensify its efforts to launch more coordinated humanitarian relief programmes. We note with great satisfaction that this issue was raised by Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi during his recent consultations with the interested countries. In this respect, we welcome the decision of the Secretary-General to reappoint Ambassador Brahimi, a well-known political figure and highly skilled diplomat, as his Special Representative in this complicated region. My Government is ready to cooperate with him in fulfilling the important tasks ahead.

The situation in Afghanistan is changing rapidly but nevertheless remains complicated, seriously threatening international peace and security. It is necessary to ensure that the coalition's operations remain limited in scope and duration in order to minimize casualties among innocent civilians.

The people of Afghanistan are extremely exhausted after more than 20 years of intense conflict. They want to live in peace and security and to rebuild their own country. We should give unanimous support to a country that has endured dramatic and tragic events for so long. We must help the Afghan people solve their internal problems and build a government capable of maintaining stability and peaceful coexistence with the neighbouring States.

We believe that, in order to find a solution to the Afghan conflict, the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity should be observed. Non-interference from external forces is one of the conditions for ensuring that the country can return to a state of normalcy. My Government believes that the vital role of resolving the conflict in Afghanistan should be played by the United Nations and the Security Council.

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, addressing the diplomatic corps on 9 November 2001, emphasized the urgent need for a settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. He shares the view expressed by the Secretary-General that the Security Council should adopt comprehensive measures in the political, military, humanitarian and human rights arenas, the outlines of which were recommended today by Ambassador Brahimi, and which are based on a careful diagnosis of the current situation.

It is imperative that, after the victory over terrorism, we establish a representative and multi-ethnic Government and make preparations for the elections in Afghanistan. The next stage should be the rehabilitation and construction process. We believe that

one of the keys to stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan lies in the economic development of the country.

Kazakhstan calls for a special meeting to consider the situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia in order to develop common approaches to the issues of inter-Afghan settlement and to adopt effective measures. With the intention of playing an active role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, we reaffirm our proposal to hold in Almaty a round of peace talks between all the parties involved.

In conclusion, I would again like to emphasize that the solution of the Afghan problem must serve peace and stability in the region and that all the interested parties must act in good faith.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Argentina. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this open debate on Afghanistan; we believe that it is particularly timely. In the last few hours, the military situation on the ground has made the role of the United Nations in the search for an acceptable and lasting political solution to the Afghan conflict even more urgent and necessary.

In keeping with its strong commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security and regional stability, Argentina has been closely following the consultation process on the future of Afghanistan and fully supports the efforts being made by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi.

We believe that, if it is to be legitimate, the new political order to be established in Afghanistan must be representative of the multi-ethnic composition of its people and be open to all those willing to start a new era of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and respect for human rights. Only fanatics and extremists should be excluded from the political arena.

We think that any realistic political arrangement for Afghanistan must take into account the legitimate security concerns of neighbouring countries. Furthermore, we must help the new Government to attain stability and security. The support of a security mechanism with an international component may therefore be necessary.

The United Nations has a central political and humanitarian role to play in helping the Afghan people and its leaders to agree on a viable political agreement. Because of its universal nature and broad mandate, the United Nations has the political legitimacy necessary to enable it to assist in the creation of a transitional Government. It is clear that this new Government must belong to the Afghan people and that the United Nations can help the different sectors to facilitate its creation and consolidation.

The United Nations has played, and must continue to play, with the support of the donor countries, a vital role in the distribution of humanitarian assistance. During the post-conflict stage, it will have to provide assistance for the economic and human development of Afghanistan. Development is an essential component of a stable and lasting peace.

Given its extensive experience in peacekeeping, Argentina stands ready to contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan by providing both the military and civilian resources that are needed to support the stability of a Government of reconciliation and national unity and to provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people. In that way, working together with other States, within the framework of the United Nations, we could contribute to the creation of a secure environment for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the distribution of humanitarian assistance to its long-suffering people.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Chile in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Ms. Alvear Valenzuela (Chile) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile.

Ms. Alvear Valenzuela (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile emphatically and unequivocally condemned the terrorist acts of 11 September. The President of Chile, Mr. Ricardo Lagos Escobar, said in his statement in the general debate that it was an attack against our values and our faith in a better world based on dialogue and cooperation. Such values became the target of terrorist fanaticism, leading to the military action that is being carried out in Afghanistan.

The Council and the General Assembly both adopted resolutions aimed at creating effective cooperation mechanisms between countries in order to tackle international terrorism. We welcome that. It is a reflection of the central role of the United Nations in this process — a role that should be intensified when it becomes necessary to adopt measures aimed at creating conditions for national stability in Afghanistan and, as a result, in the region.

That is the way to maintain international peace and security, which is the primary responsibility of this Council. Chile supports the proposals of Ambassador Brahimi designed to establish a transition process that would allow the people of Afghanistan to decide their own fate and establish a democratic Government with full respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. We would like to thank him for his tireless efforts to find a negotiated and lasting solution to an extremely complex situation.

Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. It is crucial that, once we set up a democratic government, the complex political efforts that will be made by the Afghans themselves be accompanied by a sustained commitment on the part of the international community to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis; to allow for the return of refugees; and to lay the foundation for sustainable economic and social development, which is crucial for political stability.

It is clear, however, that resolving the difficult situation prevailing in Afghanistan is but a step along the path to defeating international terrorism. As Ambassador Brahimi stated this morning, the international community cannot allow the development of new, destitute and collapsed states that will reproduce the cycle of the terrorist threat. The anti-terrorist coalition must elaborate development policies for those areas that seem to remain on the margins of globalization and of progress.

Chile trusts that the United Nations and the Council will continue to make an effective contribution, so that the Afghan people can recover their legitimate right to live in conditions of dignity, tolerance and peace.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Afghanistan, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) (*spoke in French*): I am grateful to you, Madam President, for having convened this meeting of the Council in order to discuss the situation in my country, which today is experiencing a new chapter in its history. I should like also to congratulate you on the outstanding manner in which you are conducting the work of the Council. I am also grateful to all of those around this table and in this Council Chamber who have expressed such important ideas with a view to helping my country.

The security forces of the Islamic State of Afghanistan entered the capital yesterday without any bloodshed among the civilian population. When those forces were still on the outskirts of the city, the Taliban, before fleeing, began looting the banks and foreign exchange counters. Our security forces entered the capital in order to meet the pressing needs and expectations of the people and to fill the political and administrative vacuum created by the hasty flight of Taliban members — both Afghan and foreign — and of the Al Qaeda mercenaries, who carried out attacks against the civilian population and who also looted the banks in Kabul.

The city of Kabul, which has been the capital of the country for more than two centuries, is located in southern Afghanistan, south of the Hindu Kush chain. It should be noted that many of the members of the security forces who reached Kabul have family and loved ones there.

We consider that this new phase represents not only progress towards peace and national unity in Afghanistan, but also a major victory on the part of the United Nations, the international community and all States, including our neighbours, against terrorism in the world. This new phase does not represent a monopoly of power that favours certain sectors of the population over others, but, rather, a new hope for all Afghans of different ethnic groups, who will freely and democratically define their political and social future.

The Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the United Front, which is part of it, invite the representatives of the United Nations, international organizations and all friendly countries to come to Kabul and to see firsthand how our security forces entered the town, and to also witness the warm welcome given them by the people of Kabul.

Likewise, one of the Pashtun leaders, Hamid Karzai, who was Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1996 and who is the son of the famous leader Abdul Ahad Karzai, is currently organizing — with the assistance of General Aref Nurzai, who had accompanied Commander Massoud during his official visit to the European Parliament in France — the armed resistance in the southern part of the country. We know that another leader, Commander Abdul Haq, who was preparing to fight the Taliban in the eastern and southern provinces, was betrayed by foreign secret services and executed two weeks ago by the Taliban.

Since 11 September, when the heinous and despicable terrorist attacks against New York and Washington took place — or, more specifically, since 9 September, the date of the cowardly terrorist attack against our national leader, Commander Massoud — we the States and peoples of the United Nations face two important questions.

The first question concerns effective measures to combat and eliminate terrorism in the world, and the second question relates to how to establish a political system in Afghanistan that is based on the rule of law, pluralistic democracy and respect for the rights of men and women. Indeed, these two questions are clearly closely linked.

As the Council is aware, Afghanistan and its people are the victims of a dual phenomenon that is completely beyond their control: one the one hand, terrorist acts carried out by foreign groups and movements that have illegally settled in Afghanistan and that are closely linked to international terrorist networks, and, on the other, a policy of terror carried out by the Taliban and their foreign allies, in contravention of the basic principles of Islam and of the Afghan tradition, and against human dignity.

The first question — the combat against terrorism — was the object of a comprehensive review by the United Nations in September and October 2001. We clearly indicated to the General Assembly and to the Security Council our strong desire permanently to rid Afghanistan and the Afghan people, with the help of the international community, of its hotbeds of foreign terrorists and of Taliban forces, among them those led by Osama bin Laden.

As for the second question, regarding the country's political future, that is today the primary concern of the United Nations and its Members, as well as of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the United Front, which is a part of it. We fully support all the actions and measures that have been decided and implemented in this regard in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which we have approved. In that context, we applaud and support the efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and of his Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi. Likewise, we count on the unfailing support of all Member States, and in particular of the States members of the Security Council.

We have listened very attentively to the very interesting and useful statements made today, as well as to the proposals of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative. We are grateful to Mr. Brahimi for his services to the Afghan nation, both past and present. His proposals deserve our full support. In some cases, his future talks with the Islamic State of Afghanistan will certainly be fruitful. We will keep this in mind as much as possible. Our ultimate goal is to be able to establish the necessary conditions so that the Afghan people can freely and democratically chose their constitution and political system for a free and independent Afghanistan based on the principles of Islam, the rule of law, pluralistic democracy, the rights of men and women and respect for the fundamental principles of international law incorporated in the Charter and in the practice of the United Nations. We will also fight the production of, and trafficking in, drugs.

The establishment and consolidation of peace in Afghanistan depends primarily on Afghans themselves and on all those who legally and legitimately represent them. Thus far, nearly two generations of Afghans have sacrificed themselves for their freedom and independence. Today, the Afghan people are paying a high price for foreign intervention and the fight against terrorism. No ethnic group — Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek, Hazara or other — has an absolute majority in Afghanistan, and we therefore need a multi-ethnic and broad-based government in the country.

We respect the agreement regarding Afghanistan concluded on 1 October 2001 in the framework of the Rome process and under the auspices of the former King of Afghanistan. We say very clearly to our compatriots that Afghanistan and the Afghan people are in danger and we need our solidarity and national unity, which have always emerged in exceptional circumstances regardless of our ethnic or linguistic differences or particularities, so as to return peacefully and without internal conflict or quarrels to the path of peace and security and rebuild our political, economic and social future.

We also say to our neighbours, to the Member States of the United Nations and to the international community that this objective cannot be achieved without a final end to both direct and indirect foreign intervention — in particular the intervention practised by Pakistan, which led Afghanistan to the brink of the abyss and which is still having disastrous consequences for our country, the region and the world. In particular, we recall the tragic events in Afghanistan between 1992 and 1996, especially those in Kabul. Those events were provoked mainly by direct foreign intervention in our internal affairs.

Just as we understand the desire of Pakistan not to see the establishment in Afghanistan of a Power that is hostile to its legitimate interests, we also reject that a neighbouring country may dictate to Afghans the appointment of their government or the conduct of their domestic and international policy. No country has the right to exercise a veto over the right to self-determination of the Afghan nation. Finally, we say the same thing to other neighbouring countries and to the rest of the world, who are familiar with the attachment of Afghans to freedom and independence regardless of the price.

From a military standpoint, and despite their largely insufficient material means, the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the United Front, which is a part of it, have been fighting for more than five years and will continue to do so with the same results as we have seen today and against the power of the Taliban and the pockets of foreign terrorists on our territory. We must also stress that the front against the Taliban and the terrorists is not limited to the northern part of the country alone, but also extends in large part to the rest of the country and increasingly involves all elements of the Afghan people.

Similarly, from the political point of view, we are striving to establish with representatives of all sectors of the Afghan population a political regime acceptable to all Afghans. In accordance with the lessons conveyed to us by Commander Massoud, we would like to take all the positive and negative consequences of our political experience in Afghanistan in the last two decades, and the changes that have taken place in the world during those 20 years.

Given the events under way and the advances made by our military forces with the full support of the Afghan people, we will do all we can to alleviate the suffering of our people and prevent any sort of political vacuum or interruption in the running of the country, particularly in Kabul. But it is also clear that in the current circumstances the Afghan people need the support of the United Nations and international assistance, as they will in the future. That assistance will be necessary not only to restore and consolidate peace, but also for the millions of internal and external refugees and to be able to establish all the political and administrative institutions for the reconstruction of the country, its economy and its social and cultural fabric, which has been so severely damaged.

The Islamic State of Afghanistan and the United Front, which is a part of it, like the Afghan people as a whole, count on the support and assistance of the United Nations and the international community to be able to attain all these objectives.

The President: I shall now call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi.

Mr. Brahimi: At the end of this debate, I think that it is my duty to express deep appreciation to you, Madam, to His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Jamaica and to the other honourable Foreign Ministers and representatives, who took time to attend and participate in this open debate of the Council on Afghanistan. I am truly grateful to you, Madam President, and to them for the kind words of support and encouragement you all had for the Secretary-General and for myself. The Secretary-General and all of us who work with him on this delicate issue are heartened and encouraged by your support. What is more important, the message that is going out from the Council to the world will be received by the people of Afghanistan as a most welcome and desperately needed message of solidarity and hope.

The President: I thank Mr. Brahimi for his statement. I also wanted to join him in thanking all those who have participated in this open debate, which has provided an opportunity for Members of the United Nations to benefit from the briefing provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and to express their own views on the situation in Afghanistan. The views expressed here today will certainly enrich the Council's future deliberations. I also wanted to express the appreciation of the Jamaican delegation for the kind words extended to us.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.